

INTRODUCTION OF THE MAJOR GENERAL DAVID F. WHERLEY, JR., DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NATIONAL GUARD RETENTION AND COLLEGE ACCESS ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 12, 2020

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today, I introduce the Major General David F. Wherley, Jr., District of Columbia National Guard Retention and College Access Act (NGRCA). This bill is named for General Wherley, former Commanding General of the D.C. National Guard, who, along with his wife, Ann, and seven others were tragically killed when Metro trains collided on the Red Line on June 22, 2009. This bill would permanently authorize funding for a program that provides grants for higher education to members of the D.C. National Guard, which is under the control of the federal, not the District of Columbia, government. I renamed this bill after General Wherley because he worked tirelessly with me to get funding for the program for many years, and because of his devotion to the youth of the District and to the National Guard.

The NGRCA authorizes an education incentive program, recommended by General Wherley and his successor, Major General Errol Schwartz, to stem the troublesome loss of D.C. Guard members to other units, including National Guards in surrounding states that offer such educational benefits to their Guards. I am grateful that Congress has consistently provided funds for the program at our request, most recently \$413,000 in fiscal year 2020. Permanently authorizing the program is necessary, however, to ensure that D.C. Guard members receive the same treatment and benefits as other National Guard members, particularly those in neighboring states that compete with the District for members and provide these education benefits. Today, the Guard for the nation's capital has a diminished ability to compete for regional residents if membership in the Maryland or Virginia Guards is more economically beneficial. A competitive tuition assistance program for the D.C. Guard would provide a significant and much-needed incentive to help maintain enrollment and level the field of competition. The federal government supports D.C. Guard functions and understands it should support this small benefit as well, because the appropriators have always funded the D.C. Guard program, even without authorization. However, depending on appropriations alone leaves the D.C. Guard program in a tenuous condition at odds with the tuition programs in nearby states. Because the program is not controversial, there is no reason not to permanently authorize funding for these D.C. National Guard education benefits.

I appreciate that the appropriators and ultimately Congress have not hesitated to fund the education benefits for the D.C. National Guard. This support argues strongly for permanent authorization. These small education benefits have not only encouraged high-quality recruits, but have helped the D.C. Guard to maintain the force necessary to protect the federal presence here, including the possibility of a natural disaster or terrorist attack. I am pleased to introduce this bill based on the ad-

vice of Guard personnel, who best know what is necessary.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

TRUTH ABOUT COMMUNISM

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 12, 2020

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am grateful Dr. Derek W.H. Thomas of The First Presbyterian Church of Columbia, South Carolina, in the weekly First Things (Monday, March 1) newsletter published a tribute for Richard Wurmbrand of Bucharest, Romania. This tribute is a reminder to all Americans of the tragic true inhumanity of totalitarian communism enforced by Soviet Socialists.

THE VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

THIS SATURDAY . . .

THE VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

This Saturday, February 29 (it is a leap year), is the anniversary of the arrest and imprisonment of Richard Wurmbrand in 1948. Born in Bucharest, Romania, in 1909, Richard was sent to Moscow as an adolescent to study Marxism. He was pursued by the Soviet secret police, and upon his return to Romania, he became a Comintern for the communist regime. At the outbreak of the second World War, he was converted to Christianity and was later ordained, first as an Anglican and then, as the war was almost over and his country occupied by the Soviet Union, a Lutheran. In 1944, he began a ministry to his Romanian countrymen and to Red Army soldiers. As the Soviet regime began to control churches, Wurmbrand began an "underground" ministry to his people. Within a few years, he denounced communism as incompatible with Christianity. He was arrested on February 29, 1948, while on his way to church.

Richard Wurmbrand passed through several penal facilities and would spend three years in solitary confinement, twelve feet below ground without light or sound (the guards put felt under their shoes). He later recounted that he maintained his sanity by sleeping by day and staying awake at night preaching out loud a sermon to himself.

Wurmbrand was released from prison in 1956 after eight and half years. Warned not to preach again, he continued to serve the underground churches and was arrested again in 1959 and sentenced to 25 years. During this second imprisonment, he was beaten and tortured, including mutilation, burning, and being locked in a freezer icebox. Later, he recounted how his feet were beaten until the flesh was exposed, and then the next day beaten until the bones were exposed.

In 1964, Norwegians paid the Communist regime \$10,000 for his release, and Wurmbrand and his wife would eventually emigrate to the United States. He died in 2001 in California.

During his time in the United States he authored almost 20 books and founded The Voice of the Martyrs, an organization that draws attention to the persecuted church worldwide.

Here is one of Wurmbrand's famous quotes: "I have seen Christians in Communist prisons with fifty pounds of chains on their feet, tortured with red-hot iron pokers, in whose throats spoonfuls of salt had been forced, being kept afterward without water, starving, whipped, suffering from cold—and praying with fervor for the Communists. This is

humanly inexplicable! It is the love of Christ, which was poured out in our hearts."

—Derek W.H. Thomas, Senior Minister.

HOPE RULE

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 12, 2020

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Hope Rule for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Hope Rule is a student at Arvada West High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Hope Rule is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Hope Rule for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassador for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF JUDGE FRED A. PIERANTONI III, RECIPIENT OF THE GREATER PITTSBURGH FRIENDLY SONS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 12, 2020

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Judge Fred A. Pierantoni III, who will receive the Achievement Award from the Greater Pittsburgh Friendly Sons of St. Patrick. He will be honored at the group's 106th annual gathering on Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

Judge Pierantoni is a lifelong resident of the Greater Pittsburgh Area. He is a 1976 graduate of Pittsburgh Area High School and a cum laude graduate of Wilkes University with a Bachelor of Science in political science. In 1983, Judge Pierantoni received his Juris Doctorate from Temple University's School of Law in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Following law school, Judge Pierantoni was assistant district attorney in Luzerne County from 1983 to 1988. In 1992, Judge Pierantoni was elected as magisterial judge for District 11-1-5 and has spent 20 years on the bench serving the people of the Greater Pittsburgh Area.

Judge Pierantoni was elected to the Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas and began his tenure on January 4, 2012. Since taking the bench, he has been assigned cases in criminal court including homicide, civil trials, and family court. Judge Pierantoni presently serves as administrative judge for the Luzerne County Juvenile Court Division and serves as supervising judge for the Luzerne County Grand Jury. He is also a zone delegate for the